

# Canon 812

Gerard V. Bradley

Most parties to the debate over *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* agree that Canon 812 is the heart of the matter. The Vatican's critical "Observations" on the NCCB "Application" expressly call for more on the Canon, and that more will inevitably fly in the face of the colleges' declaration of independence at Land O'Lakes 30 years ago.

I write just before Christmas, and nothing has been publicly reported of the bishops' progress toward meeting the Vatican request. No doubt the matter is being studied by the special committee, chaired by Cardinal Bevilacqua, set up to address the Holy See's concerns. But things do seem to be moving slowly and, in any event, my judgment is that the bishops will seek a *via media*, some way to satisfy Rome without having to really take on the academic theological establishment.

The bishops should stand and fight on this one. Behind the disagreement over Canon 812 lies a disagreement over what Catholic theology is, and that disagreement is substantially a product of different views about the nature of revelation (e.g., whether revelation includes effective divine communication of some true propositions in the apostolic age). Canon 812 gives reasonable practical effect to the truth about Catholic theology. As expressed by the Holy Father in ECE, that truth is: "(S)ince theology seeks an understanding of revealed truth whose authentic interpretation is entrusted to the Bishops of the Church, it is intrinsic to the principles and methods of their research and teaching in their academic discipline that theologians respect the authority of the Bishops, and assent to Catholic doctrine according to the degree of authority with which it is taught."

Opponents of implementing Canon 812 say that doing so would violate "academic freedom" and "institutional autonomy," the liberty poles erected at Land O'Lakes. Properly understood, these are vital features of Catholic universities. But as propounded at Land O'Lakes and by the establishment since, it is hard to see how these reasons can carry opponents' argument without implicitly denying what the Holy Father asserts. There can be no doubting that very many opponents do, in fact, deny (or withhold assents from) what the Holy Father asserts. Despite the Holy See's clear condemnation of Modernism as heretical, many opponents of Canon 812 continue to hold that revelation is little

(continued on page 2)

*O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae, quam quidam profitentes circa fidem aberraverunt. Gratia vobiscum. 1 ad Timotheum 6*

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or nothing more than an experience of the divine (and includes no divinely communicated propositions), that all (so-called) credal truths are really revisable human symbolizations of that experience, that the Church therefore errs, indeed it must err,

in teaching that some propositions it has taught as true are irreformable and certainly true, and so on.

Simply put, the faith is at stake in the Canon 812 debate.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Do you know what is happening to our children? We expect them to go through a jungle without a guide. We say all the time that we love them so very much, but are we helping them? The jungle is our very sick society, drugs everywhere, booze, teen suicides, a sex craze, violence and crime. Only Christ can show them the way through this maze. But at the last bishops' meeting it was reported that many of our religion textbooks are giving youth a weak and vague Jesus. No young person is going to follow a wimp. They drop out. We see this all the time.

What are we doing about it? Very little that anyone can see. Unless we give our children the Gospel Christ, bold and daring, strong and brave, we will lose thousands more of our youth in the jungle.

Regards,  
Fr. Rawley Myers  
22 W. Kiowa  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

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October 17, 1997

Dear Editor,

*You may wish to publish the following Letter to the Editor, to help spread the truth about the Holocaust and Pope Pius XII, whose strategy of restraint and action saved thousands of Jews during World War II.*

To the Editor:

The October 8, 1997, article by Jack Katzenell of the Associated Press about the Red Cross's "moral failure" and "silence" reminds me of the 16-page article for the April 7 issue of *New Yorker Magazine* by James Carroll,

an ex-priest, whose shocking comments consisted of half-truths and, to say the least, an indecent portrayal of Pope Pius XII. *The New Yorker* article is a smear of a man who saved many more Jews than any other person, including Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg.

Undoubtedly, the general public is interested in hearing other opinions regarding the "silence" of the Red Cross during the Holocaust and Pope Pius XII's strategy of restraint and action to save Jews. The Vatican was a neutral State and had to maintain its neutrality. Nor could the Red Cross, based in Switzerland, compromise its neutrality. The work of these groups would have been jeopardized by being too outspoken about the Nazis. Both the International Red Cross and the World Council of Churches agreed with the Vatican.

Whenever the Pope protested, there was retaliation. The Catholic hierarchy of Amsterdam spoke out vigorously against the Nazi treatment of the Jews. The Nazi response was a redoubling of deportations. Ninety percent of the Jews in Amsterdam were killed. Far from a passive spectator, Pope Pius XII went to extraordinary lengths to save Jewish lives. His awareness of their sufferings kept him from issuing condemnations. The Vatican worked quietly but effectively to protect Jews from Nazi persecution.

No apologies need to be made for the Pope's behavior. It took tremendous humility and strength of character for him to remain silent, knowing that he would be criticized even though he protected thousands of Jews within Vatican walls, at great risk to himself and to everything and everyone under his jurisdiction. Why do the misrepresentations about the "silence" of Pius XII continue to circulate? Why have we not succeeded in being "just" toward the memory of Pius XII?

Recent front-page articles—"French Church Issues Apology to Jews on War"—do not mention the official Vatican protest that appeared in the Swiss newspaper,

“La Tribune de Geneve” (September 8, 1942). When Pope Pius XII protested against the persecution of the Jews in France, the protest was read in all the Catholic Churches and spread rapidly, notwithstanding the French government’s order that the Pope’s protest be ignored. Instructions given to the press stated clearly: “Under no circumstances should any allusion be made about the Vatican’s protest to Marshal Petain in favor of the Jews in France.”

On many occasions the Jewish Community publicly acknowledged Pope Pius XII’s help. Already in 1941–42 contemporary publications praised him as “a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe” (*The New York Times*, December 25, 1941). These articles, unbiased in nature, admitted the Pope

left no doubt that the Nazi war aims were irreconcilable with his own conception of a Christian peace. He did not speak as a political leader: he stood above the battle, tied impartially “to all people and willing to collaborate in any new order which would bring a just peace.”

According to Jewish historian Pinchas Lapide, the underground Vatican railroad saved over 800,000 refugees throughout Europe.

*Sr. Margherita Marchione, Ph.D., author of the recently published Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in Wartime Italy. (Paulist Press, Mahwah, N.J., 1997, 272 pp., Cloth, \$14.95).*

## ARTICLES

# Building the Culture of Life in the Church

by John F. Kippley

I write this in reaction to the papers I heard delivered at the annual meeting of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars in Washington, D.C., September 19–21.

While the papers were excellent in themselves, I felt frustrated because of the emphasis on influencing the public square. In my opinion, the public square is not going to take seriously the guidance and the wisdom of Catholic teaching until it is evident that the Catholic people take it seriously. I do not think it is just coincidental that the U. S. Government got into the birth control business in a big way with Title X in 1970 when it was obvious that the Church in this country was so divided about birth control that it could not present any sort of united front.

At the conference, speakers noted that 80 to 85 percent of Catholics disagree with Catholic teaching about birth control. Those figures would apply to all Catholics including celibates and those beyond their fertile years. A more relevant figure is that of the 1988 National Family Growth Survey. Among people identifying themselves as sexually

active and doing anything at all about birth control, 97 percent of Catholics, 98 percent of Protestants, and 99 percent of the unchurched said they used unnatural forms of birth control. That means that the birth control practices of Catholics are scarcely distinguishable from those of the pagans. That means also that the culture of death rules in American Catholicism as well as in the culture as a whole.

The big question is this: Where can we start to build a culture of life within the Catholic Church?

The National Council of Catholic Bishops has given us an answer. In 1988, the same year as the above mentioned survey, the NCCB Bishops’ Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices published a 154 page soft cover book titled *Faithful to Each Other Forever*, subtitled “A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation.” On page 47, the Committee made the following recommendation:

Indeed, given current cultural conditioning and the fact that virtually all couples begin marriage using some form of family planning, we urge that premarriage programs require a full course of instruction in natural family planning as a necessary component in the

couple's effective realization of what they need and have a right to know in order to live in accord with the clear teaching of the Church. NFP instructors often note a change in perception among those required to learn NFP prior to marriage: "We would never have taken this course if it had not been required, but now we're glad we did."

I submit that in this statement, the American bishops have given us an essential first step toward the building of a culture of life within the Church and ultimately within the country. What will be the results of such a policy? I submit that for every 100 engaged couples who take a full four-meeting course in natural family planning (NFP) set in the context of Catholic teaching, the Church would see the following results:

1. Approximately 25 of those couples would accept Catholic teaching then and there; they would start their marriages either postponing pregnancy with NFP or prepared to start their family on their honeymoon.
2. Another 25 couples will accept Catholic teaching and practice within the first three years. Couples using unnatural methods tend to switch methods about every two years, so I have read someplace, and when our contracepting Catholic couples become unhappy with their unnatural methods, a good number will decide to try NFP. In addition, many couples will reject the Pill and

other chemical forms of birth control because they have been informed about their abortifacient properties.

3. Another 10–15 couples will accept Catholic teaching and practice by their 10th anniversary for the same reasons given above.

I submit that when close to two-thirds of younger married couples are believing and living in accord with Catholic teaching about the demands of love within marriage, the Church will be taking on a new face, dissent will be increasingly seen as fraudulent, the empty pews will start filling, and so will the seminaries.

Several dioceses are working with the Couple to Couple League toward implementing the above recommendation of the Bishops' Committee. I submit that every member of the Fellowship can hasten the full implementation of this recommendation through prayer and through whatever personal contacts he or she may enjoy.

The bishops' recommendation is most practical, and it comes from the right place. It creates truly a win-win situation for the Church, individual couples, the priests who participate, and those who teach NFP and would prefer full classes to the current situation. For further information, contact me at CCL, P.O. Box 111184, Cincinnati OH 45211.

## Why Thomism?

Jude P. Dougherty  
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*The Catholic University of America*  
*Washington, D.C.*

**I**t behooves us to reflect occasionally on the origins and rationale for the movement we today call "Thomism." When Leo XIII in his 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris* recommended the study of St. Thomas, he did so

with the hope that the widespread adoption of the realist philosophy of Aquinas would serve as an antidote to the Enlightenment-inspired positivisms and materialisms of the 19th century.

Leo was not alone in his judgment that the dominant philosophers of the day undercut religious belief. Of the same generation, the American philosopher Josiah Royce addressed the need for a philosophy which could serve as the rational preamble to the Christian faith, and he attempted to

provide one with his own version of a Hegelian-inspired idealism. Royce was one of many who looked to German idealism as a support to Christianity. In the first issue of *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the journal of the St. Louis Philosophical Society, founded in 1874, William Torrey Harris gave three reasons for the pursuit of speculative philosophy. In his judgment, speculative philosophy provides, first, a philosophy of religion (read natural theology) much needed at a time when traditional religious teaching and ecclesiastical authority were losing their influence. Secondly, it provides a social philosophy compatible with a communal outlook as opposed to a socially devastating individualism. Thirdly, while taking cognizance of the startling advances in the natural sciences, it provides an alternative to empiricism as a philosophy of knowledge. Harris could have recommended Thomism for the same reasons. Leo recommended the philosophy of St. Thomas because he recognized that, in his own words, "Philosophy can only be fought with philosophy." Royce was later to congratulate Pope Leo for letting loose "a thinker to be sure of unquestioned orthodoxy, but after all a genuine thinker whom the textbooks had long tried, as it were, to keep lifeless, and who once revived, proves to be full of the suggestion of new problems, and of an effort toward new solutions." But Royce was also fearful that a resurgent Thomism might give way to the Kantian legions and their demand that the epistemological issue be settled first, a fear later shared by Etienne Gilson.



## II

If I have any advice to Thomists, it would be this: Do not forget why Leo XIII lent his authority to the nascent Thomistic revival of his day. Give or take a few combatants, the same forces remain arrayed against Christianity and its moral and social teachings, particularly as advanced by the Catholic Church. If anything, the enemy of belief is even more sophisticated. The supposed conflict between science and religion may in this century have been laid to rest, 19th century positivism may have been supplanted by a realist (largely Aristotelian) philosophy of science, and forgotten is Comte's religion of humanity. Yet the secular outlook prevails; one may say dominates the culture. Since it rules from the academy, it can only be successfully exposed there. As Christopher Dawson has reminded us, "the secular leviathan is vulnerable only at its brain." Appeals to the natural sciences in support of materialism need to be displayed as bogus. Here the realism of Aristotle and Thomas is a forceful antidote.

It goes without saying that the philosopher must remain true to his method; he is not an apologist. But the philosopher who is Christian cannot stand by as others employ their philosophical skills to rob religious belief of its integrity and reasonableness. One can easily remain aloof from the intellectual battles which engage the Church. Philosophy today has many compartments which can be pursued in isolation from the cultural conflict. But the Thomist, while remaining true to his intellectual calling, can also place his intellect in the service of Christ, as did Aquinas himself. Desire Mercier, Leo Ward, Edith Stein, Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain are models here. So, too, in our own day are Ralph McInerny, William A. Wallace, Robert Sokolowski, and many others who may subscribe to this newsletter.

## Father Albert Jerome Nevins, M.M.

1915–1997

Father Albert Nevins, longtime friend of the Fellowship, died December 15, 1997. He was 82 years old, a Maryknoll priest for 55 years, and former publisher of *Our Sunday Visitor*. He entered Maryknoll on September 7, 1932, and was ordained a priest on June 21, 1942.

On November 10, 1969, he accepted, with the Society's permission, the editorship of *Our Sunday Visitor* in Huntington, Indiana, where he served for 11 years. He was also the editor of *The Priest* and other OSV publications, and director of OSV's book publishing operation. He retired as editor and publisher of *Our Sunday Visitor* on September 29, 1980.

Over the years much recognition and many awards were given to Father Nevins. He was president of the

Catholic Press Association, and for many years he was on the board of directors of the Inter-American Press Association, and also served as treasurer of the IAPA Technical Center. He was awarded honorary doctorates by the Catholic University of Puerto Rico and St. Benedict's College, Atchison, Kansas. He was awarded the Maria Moors Cabot gold medal at Columbia University for outstanding journalistic achievements on October 25, 1961. Among other awards he received were the St. Augustine Award from Villanova University, and the St. Francis de Sales Award from the Catholic Press Association. In 1980 he received the Papal Distinction "*Bene Merenti*" for his distinguished service in journalism in the United States. He had been biographed for many years in "Who's Who in America."

In the course of His OSV tenure, Father Nevins published a number of books by *Fellowship* members.

## Joseph Pieper

1904–1997

Joseph Pieper, one of the great Catholic philosophers of this century, died peacefully in his home on November 6th. He was laid to rest in Munster.

From the time of his Ph.D. candidacy, Joseph Pieper devoted his formidable talent to the study of the classical intellectual tradition, beginning with its sources in ancient Greece, through its development in the Middle Ages to its contemporary appropriation. Born in 1904 in Elte, Germany, Pieper studied law and sociology at Munster and Berlin. His doctoral dissertation was entitled "The Ontic Foundation of Morality in Thomas Aquinas." Pieper, like his mentor St. Thomas, possessed the rare ability to go immediately to the core of his subject matter, defining and distinguishing, while ever attentive to the essential structures controlling his inquiry. His simple and powerful prose easily lent itself to translation and gained for him a world-wide audience. The author of more than 50 books, he has been translated into 15 languages. Then taken together, those books have sold more than a million copies. An early work, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, secured for him an English-speaking following. That book was succeeded by others equally accepted, *The Silence of St. Thomas*, *The End of Time*, *Belief and Faith*, and short,

eloquent essays on each of the four cardinal and three theological virtues. The first part of his autobiography entitled *No One Could Have Known*, typical of his objectivity, is more about Germany in a troubled time than it is about the observer. At war's end he joined the faculty of the Wilhelm University in Munster, rising through the ranks, to become ordinary professor in 1959.

At Munster, Pieper established a reputation not only as a clear expositor of the classical tradition and its relevance for contemporary discussion but as an incisive critic of what he took to be dehumanizing philosophical trends from positivism to absolute idealism. At the same time he gained recognition for his own work as a metaphysician of first rank.

A near contemporary of Maritain and Gilson, Pieper found in St. Thomas and the intellectual tradition he represented, a font of wisdom, speculative and practical. Perhaps more so than his French colleagues he directly addressed the cultural disintegration of the West, probing history to understand the present. His books, while timely, remain time transcendent. Through them he lives, to teach another generation.

Jude P. Dougherty, Dean  
School of Philosophy  
*The Catholic University of America*

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## Monsignor Edward A. Synan

Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies  
59 Queen's Park Crescent East  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
25 August 1997

To Colleagues and Friends of Edward A. Synan:

Most of you will already be aware of the death of Monsignor Edward Synan on 3 August 1997, at the age of 79. Many have asked about the circumstances, which are the following: after experiencing some rapid heartbeat and two sleepless nights on 28–29 July, he asked to be admitted to the Basilian Fathers' nursing-care facility at the Cardinal Flahiff Centre. A doctor saw him twice and prescribed tests and medication. He seemed to be rallying, and slept soundly the rest of the week. He felt well enough on Friday and Saturday to make revisions to an article he intended to submit to a *Festschrift*, and received a number of visitors. Checking throughout the night, the nurses found him sleeping, but he died peacefully in his sleep the next morning.

A Mass of Resurrection was celebrated for Monsignor Synan in the chapel of the Cardinal Flahiff Centre on Tuesday evening, at which I had the privilege to preside. It was attended by 175 persons; eighty others had paid their respects that afternoon. A vigil Mass was

celebrated at Immaculate Conception chapel of Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, on Wednesday evening, by Bishop DeMarzio, auxiliary Bishop of Newark. The Funeral Mass and Final Commendation were celebrated by his Grace Theodore McGarrick, Archbishop of Newark, on Thursday morning, August 6. Father Synan was buried that day next to his parents at Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Montclair, New Jersey.

Edward Synan is survived by a sister, Mrs. James F. (Mary E.) Mooney, 3176 Summit Square Drive, Apt. A 3, Oakton, Virginia 22124; by a niece, Mrs. Joseph (Nancy) Madden, 1734 Wind Haven Way, Vienna, Virginia 22180; and by several grandnieces and grand-nephews.

His Grace Aloysius Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto and Chancellor of the Pontifical Institute, will celebrate a memorial Mass for him on 24 October 1997 in St. Basil's Church, at 3:30 p.m., to which all his friends and colleagues are invited. The 1997 issue of the Institute's journal *Mediaeval Studies* will be dedicated to Monsignor Synan, and will contain a short biography and a bibliography of his scholarly work.

Should you wish other information, please contact Ms. Karen Dinsdale at 416/926-7142; or myself at 416/926-7283; e-mail: [jfarge@chass.utoronto.ca](mailto:jfarge@chass.utoronto.ca)

Sincerely,  
James K. Farge, C.S.B.

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### DOCUMENTATION

## Blessed Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, O.C.D. (Edith Stein) Homily at the Mass of Commemoration

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*Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception  
August 12, 1997*

J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P.

"This is the truth!" These were Edith Stein's words when she knew that she would become a Christian. Naturally, they are words that thrill a Dominican's heart (like my own). But it is no accident that they were the words Edith Stein uttered when she had finished reading a book by a great

Carmelite, and that, subsequently and for many years, her spiritual home was a Benedictine abbey and its abbot her spiritual director. Perhaps, with factors like these in mind, the Catholic philosopher Erich Przywara was led to say of Edith Stein that she was the product of three orders: the Dominican, the Benedictine, and the Carmelite. It turns out that her attraction for these great spiritual traditions illumines the great passions of her life—for truth, for contemplation and for the cross.

## 1. The Dominican spirit: LOVE OF THE TRUTH

“This is the truth!” she exclaimed, after concluding St. Theresa of Avila’s autobiography. It was the summer of 1921 and Edith had joined other members of the Göttingen Philosophy Circle for a long visit at the home of her good friend Hedwig Conrad-Martius. She was home alone one evening when, looking for something to read, she chanced upon a copy of St. Theresa’s autobiography. She read through the night, and, according to her own account of the experience, she exclaimed “this is the truth!” when she had finished the book the next morning. She promptly went out and bought herself a catechism and a daily missal. Then within a few months, on January 1, 1922, she was baptized a Catholic at St. Martin’s Church in Bergzabern.

In a remarkable way, her exclamation “this is the truth!” climaxed a long search for truth that had consumed Edith Stein throughout almost a decade of intense philosophical work and would continue to characterize her life of research and teaching during the next years before her entry into Carmel and, indeed, right up to the weeks before her death at Auschwitz on August 9, 1942.

The Dominican connection was clearly present, both in her study and translation of the works of Thomas Aquinas, and in her years of teaching the Dominican nuns at Speyer. But the Dominican tradition touched a chord deep in her own being. At one point, Edith Stein termed God “The Great Educator.” She was a seeker after the truth who is God.

By God’s grace, her pursuit of truth led her to the faith. Her philosophical work is a permanent contribution in several areas of phenomenological reflection, not least of all is her work on the ontology of woman, which influenced the thought and teaching of Pope John Paul II on the place of women in the Church.

In the end, only God could satisfy her yearning for truth, for God himself is the Truth she sought. No surprise, then, that Edith Stein was drawn to a life focused on God alone.

## 2. The Benedictine spirit: LOVE OF CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

In *Finite and Eternal Being*, Edith Stein wrote:

Those who live the interior life have always experienced being drawn into their innermost parts by that which draws

more strongly than the total exterior world: the invasion of a new, forceful, higher life—the supernatural divine life.

Edith Stein’s love of prayer and silence had been nurtured in her throughout her Jewish childhood by her mother. During her teenage years, even though she confessed that she had become unable to pray to a personal God, she experienced an intense inner life. Little wonder that after her conversion from atheism, she almost immediately wanted to become a contemplative. During the decade between her conversion and her entry into Carmel in 1933, she was a frequent visitor at the great Benedictine abbey at Beuron, where she particularly relished the monastic environment of silence and dedication, and the solemn liturgical celebrations of Christmas and Paschaltide. The abbot of Beuron, Father Raphael Waltzer, was her spiritual director. Her love of the Benedictine tradition is mirrored in the choice of her name in Carmel, Teresa *Benedicta* of the Cross.

As Freda Mary Oben points out in her book, *Edith Stein: Scholar, Feminist and Saint* (Alba House, 1988), in the years following her conversion when she taught at Speyer, Edith Stein had become increasingly dissatisfied with secular life. She was convinced that she had an authentic vocation to the contemplative life. Finally, after 13 hours of prayer one day in St. Ludgeri’s Church in Münster, she determined to become a Carmelite. She was 42 years old when, on October 14, 1933, she entered Mary Queen of Peace Carmel in Cologne and was able to celebrate the feast of St. Theresa of Avila in the bosom of Carmel on the next day.

Many of the nuns who knew her there have attested to the intensity with which she embraced the life of prayer and contemplation, of silence and mortification—in short, the life of love for which she had so long yearned. That Edith Stein was very happy about this was no secret. Indeed, her joy was evident. She said: “I have never laughed so much during my entire life as I have these two years as a novice.” She devoted herself with characteristic energy to the life and observances of the Cologne Carmel, and even found the time to complete one of her most important philosophical works, *Finite and Eternal Being*—a book that would not be published until 1950.

And here the shadow of the cross loomed large. For, because she was born a Jew, Edith Stein had lost her right to publish. It was 1935, the year of her first

vows as a Carmelite and the year of the promulgation of the fateful Nuremberg Statutes which deprived Jews of all legal rights.

### 3. The Carmelite spirit: LOVE OF THE CROSS

In her essay, “The Road to Carmel,” Edith Stein wrote:

I spoke to our Savior and told him that I knew it was His Cross which was now being laid on the Jewish people. Most of them did not understand it; but those who did understand must accept it willingly in the name of all.

These words hint at the deeply mysterious way in which Edith Stein vicariously identified herself with her people. It is a matter which she always understood to be of great significance for the meaning of her life—a conviction that her mother had inspired in her—that her birthday was October 21, 1891, the feast of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, that year. Indeed, 42 years later, with her entrance into Carmel, she identified herself with Queen Esther (see Esther 8:3-6):

I am confident that the Lord has taken my life for all the Jews. I always have to think of Queen Esther, who was taken away from her people for the express purpose of standing before the king for her people. I am the very poor, weak and small Esther, but the king who selected me is very great and merciful.

She could not have known then how prophetic these words would turn out to be.

After her conversion, Edith Stein increasingly saw herself as providentially standing for and with her people against the terrible and mounting evil of Nazi anti-Semitism which culminated in the genocidal Holocaust, which, though it crushed many non-Jews in its wake, was explicitly conceived and pursued as a destruction of the Jewish people. Edith Stein was in no way isolated from the accumulating horror of Nazi anti-Semitism, either as a Catholic or later as a nun in the Cologne Carmel, and finally as one of its victims.

Her identification with the Cross of Christ, and her love for it, had drawn her to Carmel in the first place. Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, as she came to be called, wrote the following:

I am quite content in any case. One can only learn a ‘Science of the Cross’ if one feels the cross in one’s own person. I was convinced of this from the very first and have said with all my heart ‘Hail Cross, our only hope.’

On the night of December 31, 1938, she left Cologne

and fled to the Carmel at Echt in Holland. Her sister Rosa (who had also become a Catholic) joined her in 1940 at Echt. There she remained, wearing the mandated Jewish star on her Carmelite habit, until August 2, 1942, when Nazi officials came to arrest her.

The events of the last month of her life show clearly why this great saint is to be venerated in the Church as a martyr. There is a fact that is little known yet is of great significance for understanding the nature of her martyrdom. On July 26, 1942, the Dutch bishops protested the deportation of Jews in a pastoral letter read in all the Churches of Holland. The Nazi officials retaliated by arresting all Catholics, but not other Christians, of Jewish origins. They came for Edith and her sister Rosa on August 2. After passing through several other camps, they finally arrived at Auschwitz on August 9, and they died in the gas chamber there on that very day. Thus it happened, in God’s mysterious design, that Edith Stein—Blessed Teresa Benedicta of the Cross—went to her death, as a Jew, embracing solidarity with her people, and, as a Christian, bearing witness unto death to the Catholic protest against the evil of anti-Semitism.

Only in the “science of the Cross” could such a death have the meaning of a victory. We learn this science from Christ himself who, in a definitive way, conquered the evil of sin and death through the Cross, and who leads each one of us, one by one, through the same passage—*passio*—so that sin will die in us and give way to the newness of life.

In declaring Edith Stein a saint and martyr, the Church expresses her faith that, in the end, it was God himself who blessed and enabled Edith Stein’s willing embrace of the Cross and her vicarious representation of her people and, by this sign, confirmed our faith in Christ’s victory over evil, even in the organized and seemingly superhuman form it assumed in Nazi anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

Thus it turns out that the Dominican love for truth, the Benedictine love for a life focused on God alone, and the Carmelite love of the cross converged in a remarkable way in the distinctive spirit of this great saint. For what she learned and embodied in her own life is that the ultimate truth that God teaches us can only be summed up in the wisdom of the Cross. Let the final words about this be Edith Stein’s:

The bridal union of the soul with God for which it is created is purchased through the cross, perfected with the cross, and sealed for all eternity with the cross.

## The Church's Magisterium in the Face of the Moral Crisis of Our Time.

*Opening Paper by Cardinal Cahal B. Daly  
Linacre Centre for Health Care Ethics  
20th Anniversary International Conference  
"Issues for a Catholic Bioethic"  
Queen's College, Cambridge, July 28–31, 1997*

That there is moral crisis in our time few would deny. A wide range of behaviors which, until comparatively recently, would have been regarded as morally wrong by majority public opinion and would have been officially condemned as sinful by virtually all the Christian Churches, and indeed by the great religious traditions of the world, are now widely regarded in public opinion as morally blameless and are indeed socially acceptable and in some cases legally sanctioned. There is no need to give examples, they are evident all around us, they exist in all social strata and pervade much of what we like to call "the developed world."

It is not only in practical behavior that this moral change has come about; the actual moral principles and values by which people justify behavior have themselves changed. The very concept of universally valid moral principles is today called in question, so that we can say that the moral values now commonly invoked make moral consensus in society virtually impossible, and indeed make it in principle impossible to call any behavior morally wrong in any absolute or universal sense. The principle of universality has, however, been accepted by the main stream of Western tradition over many centuries as the specific characteristic of moral discourse.

From pre-Christian Rome, for example, we have the following declaration:

"There is in fact a true law—namely right reason—which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions it restrains them from doing wrong . . . To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation, and to annul it wholly is impossible. Neither the Senate nor the people can absolve us from our obligations to obey this law, and it requires no (jurist) to expound and interpret it.

It will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at

Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all people; and there will be, as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and its sponsor. The man who will not obey will abandon his better self, and, in denying the true nature of man, will thereby suffer the severest of penalties, though he has escaped all the other consequences which men call punishment."

This statement is, from Marcus Tullius Cicero (*De Republica III 33*).

I pass to the beginning of the modern period, and to one of the leading thinkers of the "Enlightenment," Immanuel Kant. Kant, as is well known, regarded the universalisability of moral principle as a defining quality of moral judgement, indeed as "the *Type*" of the moral law. Kant wrote:

"Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that (your maxim) should become universal law."

This is Kant's first formulation of the "categorical imperative." He goes on to give two other formulations. The second is:

"So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other in every case as an end and never only as a means."

This is preceded by the statement that there is a being "whose existence has in itself an absolute worth, something which, being an end in itself, could be a source of definite laws." The human person is such a being, who "exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used" by others. The third formulation of the categorical imperative is "the idea of the will of every rational being as a universal legislative will."

The categorical imperative, in each of its three formulations, enables Kant to pronounce certain specific types of behavior as objectively and universally and absolutely wrong: for example, suicide, promise breaking, failure to respect the rights of others; all of these are held by him to contradict the very nature of moral law and, to be, therefore, intrinsically morally wrong. Furthermore, the human race is called and indeed obliged to aim at becoming a "kingdom of

ends,” namely “a union of different rational beings in a system of common laws.” The latter comes close to a statement of the rationality and objectivity and universality of human rights, where every person is, as an end in himself or herself, morally entitled to be treated as such by others and is, reciprocally, morally obliged to treat others as each an end *in* themselves and never as a means to someone else’s end.

Kant’s “*Critique of Practical Reason*” therefore, has many of the elements of the great Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian moral tradition which is the basis of Western civilization, even if Kant’s formulation paradoxically carried within it the seeds of a philosophical overgrowth which later seriously damaged that tradition. The contemporary situation is in effect a reversal of both the Graeco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian and of the Kantian insistence on the objectivity, the immutability and the universal validity of moral principles and, consequently, of human rights.

## Crisis of Civilization

**T**he rejection by many, both in principle and in practice, of these moral principles, therefore, amounts to a real moral crisis, a crisis of culture, of immense magnitude and of potentially very serious implications for the future of humanity. Indeed this has to be called a crisis of civilization; for it contains many of the elements of an abandonment in principle of the concept of natural law, which has been a foundation principle of Western civilization since Graeco-Roman times, and which still underlay both the French and the American revolutions, and which, to this day, underpins the efforts within the United Nations to obtain international recognition and eventual enforcement of a universal charter of human rights, based on moral duties which are universal in time and in place, and from which no State and no individual can claim exemption.

This is the moral consensus on which freedom under truth and freedom under law depend, and consequently on which the future of civilization depends. But this consensus is fatally undermined by the growing acceptance in our culture of moral relativism or moral subjectivism, and by the acceptance in too many sectors of Catholic moral theology of a theory of consequentialism or proportionalism, which bases moral judgment on a subjective calculation of the overall consequences of an action, rather than on its intrinsic and objective moral nature.

## Conscience

**I**wish to look at one or two of the frightening lessons to be learned from the crisis. One lesson is that of the fragility of the moral conscience. Conscience is indeed, as the Second Vatican Council says, “the most secret core and sanctuary of man,” where he is “alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 16). But, as Newman pointed out, the noble name of conscience can be debased into “a liberty of self-will.” “What,” Newman asked, a century and a quarter ago, “if a man’s conscience embraces the idea of ... infanticide or free love?” This would, for Newman, be “of all conceivable absurdities the wildest and most stupid.” Yet we are all too sadly aware how widespread, in contemporary society, even among Catholics, is, precisely, “free love”: sexual intercourse before marriage, cohabitation, relations outside marriage, have become commonplace. Indeed infanticide itself will sometimes be condoned in media and public debate on grounds of compassion for a distressed mother; while “partial birth” abortions, which are impossible to distinguish from infanticide, are camouflaged as a necessary part of “reproductive health care,” and are presently in danger of being explicitly legally sanctioned in the United States of America; and abortion, which is morally of the same genus as infanticide, has become common obstetric practice in most of the countries of Europe and North America.

The virtually universal moral consensus about the evil of abortion, which prevailed until comparatively recently, has been superseded with remarkable speed in many countries by a social and cultural and legal acceptance of abortion, to the point where “walk-in” abortions can calmly be advertised as a service to women’s health. Sterilization, which once was regarded with horror and was associated with the moral depravity and wickedness of Nazism, is now commonly presented as merely a simple and normal surgical procedure, and has even been hailed as “the most loving thing a man can do for a woman.”

Nor is this debasing of conscience and of language found only in the realms of sex and reproduction; it is found also in politics, in business and finance, in the arms trade, in the practices of terrorism and in the conduct of war and the growing prevalence of crime accompanied by violence. In many of these areas, we find a casual acceptance of such principles as that “the end justifies the means,” “it increases profits,” “it increases employment,” et cetera.

How much more shamefully true it is, therefore, in contemporary society than it was when Newman wrote his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, that

“... in this age, with a large portion of the public (conscience) is the very right and freedom of conscience to dispense with conscience, to ignore a Lawgiver and Judge ... Conscience is a stem monitor, but, in this century, it has been superseded by a counterfeit, which the 18 centuries prior to it never heard of and could not have mistaken for it if they had. It is the right of self-will.”

The speed and apparent ease with which conscience itself can be conditioned and corrupted raises very serious pastoral questions for the Church in a pluralist society.

### The Power of Words

A second lesson of the contemporary moral and cultural crisis is that of the power of words to alter moral perceptions and to persuade people that what once was sin is now morally licit. We need not look far for examples. It has become “politically incorrect” to use moral language about behavior, because this is “judgmental” and “discriminatory,” and causes “unhealthy guilt feelings” in others. Moral judgement is often casually assumed to be a private matter for oneself only; and no individual is allowed any right to judge others by his or her private moral standards, or to impose her or his moral values on others. Instead, people have come to use morally neutral terms, or terms of psychological categorization or socio-medical classification, or even terms of commendation of the agent, but very rarely moral condemnation of another’s actions.

Thus the word “fornication” is banished from public discourse and is replaced by such terms as “being in a relationship,” divorce is “a second relationship,” adultery is “having an affair,” contraception or even sterilization is “responsible sex.” In other areas of behavior, we speak of civilian casualties in war as “collateral damage,” of area bombing “as precision bombing,” of low-wage economies as “tiger economies,” or as economies which “follow the laws of the marketplace.” Deliberately ending the life of a senile or incurably ill person is called “letting him or her die with dignity.” The abuse of language in these cases is manifest. Pope John Paul, in *Evangelium Vitae*, has referred in this connection to St. Paul’s description of pagan Rome as composed of people who “become futile in

their thinking,” whose “senseless minds are darkened” (*E.V.* 24).

### Power of Language

A further abuse of language which is relevant to the present moral debate is the use of words, not to communicate about a moral issue, but to discredit the opponent and disqualify him or her from being even listened to. In recent debates in Ireland about abortion and about divorce, for example, no terms were more often used in the media and in public discussion about pro-life and anti-divorce spokespersons or groups than terms like “fundamentalists,” “extremists,” or, horror of horrors, “extremist fundamentalists,” or “right-wing Catholics” “conservative Catholics,” “old-style Catholics.” “sectarian bigots,” etc. The issues as such are not debated, but the protagonists for life and for family are labeled in such a way as to exclude them from “modern,” “progressive,” and “civilized” society and consequently to classify them as people whose views could by definition have no validity. We know how often the teaching of Pope John Paul is similarly dismissed by derogatory remarks about his so-called “conservative” background in “pre-Vatican II Polish Catholicism,” or about his alleged attempts to “roll back” the Vatican Council, et cetera.

The persuasive power of ethical terms, which Charles L. Stevenson developed into a comprehensive theory of ethics, has certainly played a part in today’s moral crisis. Ian Robinson, in a book on “The Survival of English,” has spoken of “linguistic magic.” Pope John Paul again calls attention to this seductive danger and urges us

“now more than ever to have the courage to look the truth in the eye and to call things by their proper names without yielding to convenient compromises or to the temptation of self-deception.... No words have the power to change the intrinsic reality of things.” (*E.V.* 58)

### Religion and Morality

Another conclusion to be drawn from the contemporary crisis is that religious faith and morality are very closely connected. It has long been a dogma of secular humanists that ethics is completely independent of religion and carries within itself its own self-validating power. Indeed, following Kant, many, if not most, moral philosophers have held that decisions and choices made for religious motives are

not truly moral; it is said that moral choices have to be “autonomous,” whereas choices made on religious grounds are “heteronomous,” and therefore morally inauthentic. Surely, however, it would be implausible to deny that the crisis in contemporary morals has been, not just accompanied by, but in large part caused by, decline in religious faith and practice. Pope John Paul is surely right when he calls, in both of his great moral encyclicals, for a deep conversion of consciences and an individual and collective response to the Christian call to contemplative prayer and to holiness. Nothing less will equip us to resist the modern “culture of death” and to create a new “culture of life.”

The decline in moral thinking and in moral standards in contemporary society, however, does not justify a blanket condemnation of modern society, and does not make critics of this decline into nostalgic, background-looking, *laudatores temporis acti*. There was immorality in every society throughout history, and there is much in modern society which represents genuine moral progress. We must as Christians embrace all that is true and good in modern culture; and indeed it is those who have a deep understanding and a genuine appreciation of what is true and good in modern society who can most credibly criticize what is erroneous and evil. This is precisely how Pope John Paul views modern culture, with full appreciation of “the positive signs at work in humanity’s present situation.” He warns against “sterile discouragement,” and enumerates many of “signs of hope” which give us courage. (*E. V.* 26-7)

## Role of Magisterium

The modern crisis of morality unfortunately coincided with something of a crisis in Catholic moral theology. The profound renewal of dogmatic theology which climaxed in the Second Vatican Council was preceded by many decades of previous preparation. A number of distinguished Catholic exegetes and theologians were laying the foundations long before the Council, particularly in the post World War II period. Great names like those of Bea, Benoit, Feuillet, Dupont, in scripture and von Balthasar, Rahner, de Lubac and Congar in theology, come immediately to mind. Sadly, there were no comparable great names in moral theology, although Pope Pius XII had made very significant contributions to Catholic teaching on the great moral issues of his time.

The Council itself did not formally address the area of moral theology, although its documents, especially *Gaudium et Spes*, have important paragraphs on moral themes, especially in the area of marriage and family and of social justice. The Council did, however, issue a call to scholars to undertake a renewal of moral theology, based on the teaching of Scripture and responding to the problems and aspirations of modern culture (Decree on Priestly Formation, *Optatam Totius* 16 and *Gaudium et Spes* 62). Bernard Haring made a valiant effort to outline a new approach to moral theology, based on Christ’s new commandment of love, but faithful to the great tradition of the Church. Unfortunately, however, like many others, Haring got caught up in the *Humanae Vitae* controversy and increasingly took the line of dissent.

The negative reaction of some to *Humanae Vitae* both exposed the existing weaknesses in the teaching of modern theology and created new weaknesses. Those in the first wave of dissent seemed sincerely to believe that the Church’s traditional ruling on contraception could be changed without any effect on the rest of Catholic moral teaching. They quickly found, however, that the logic of their position on contraception went very much further than they had originally intended; indeed it obliged them to adopt positions which unravelled the whole of the Church’s sexual morality, and, not only that, but also involved a drastic rewriting of large areas of traditional Catholic moral teaching. Helped by an enthusiastically compliant media, dissent spread rather widely among the Catholic moral theological community and spread from there to considerable sections of the wider Catholic family. This undoubtedly weakened the Church’s stand in face of the many grave evils confronting her in modern society. It was this situation that Pope John Paul II was addressing in his two great encyclicals, *Veritatis Splendor* in 1993 and *Evangelium Vitae* in 1995.

In *Veritatis Splendor* Pope John Paul, in firm language, declares that

“within the context of the theological debates which have followed the Council there have developed certain interpretations of Christian morality which are not consistent with ‘sound teaching’ ... The Magisterium has the duty to state that some trends of theological thinking and certain philosophical affirmations are incompatible with revealed truth” (*V.S.* 29).

The Pope makes it plain that conscience is not the source of values (*V.S.* 32). He strongly emphasized the

truth that there are moral laws which bind universally and there are behaviors which are objectively and intrinsically evil in themselves (*V.S.* 51-3). Three times in *Evangelium Vitae* Pope John Paul invokes Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church and the universal magisterium of the Bishops united with the Pope, and his own Petrine authority, as well as the natural law, to declare specific acts to be intrinsically morally wrong:

“By the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his successors, in common with Bishops ... I declare that direct abortion, that is to say abortion willed as an end or as a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being “(*E.V.* 62).

“I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person” (*E.V.* 65).

“Suicide is always as morally objectionable as murder. The Church’s tradition has always rejected it as a gravely evil choice. ... Suicide, viewed objectively, is always a gravely immoral act” (*E.V.* 66).

*Veritatis Splendor* is addressed directly to Bishops. The Pope speaks to them as “Brothers who share with me the responsibility of safeguarding sound teaching.” He speaks of himself and the Bishops together as “we pastors.” Obviously, this document is intended as a statement of the moral principles upheld by the Church’s ordinary and universal magisterium. Published in 1995, *Evangelium Vitae* was prepared for by especially convened Consistory of Cardinals in 1991, and by a questionnaire sent to every Bishop in the Church. This encyclical is also, therefore, clearly an exercise of the ordinary and universal Magisterium. Taken together, these two documents laid down firm principles for Catholic moral teaching and clear parameters for the still awaited renewal of Catholic moral theology.

## Challenge to Church and Society

These documents also constitute a challenge to Church and to society. The Pope is, as always, conscious that the Church is engaged in a mighty spiritual combat, and that only a real struggle for holiness of life on the part of all Catholics will arm us for that combat. He calls for a renewal of the sense of mystery, of wonder and of reverence before God and before God’s gift of human life. He calls for the fostering of a contemplative outlook (*E.V.* 83), and

a renewed sense of the sacredness of human life. He outlines what can be called a comprehensive and consistent pro-life ethic, indeed for a “culture of life” to confront the growing “culture of death” in modern society. He asks all Catholics to become “people of life,” so that “a new culture of love and solidarity may develop for the true good of the whole of human society.” (*E.V.* 101)

The pressures against the Church’s teaching in virtually all areas of morality might seem irresistible. A remark attributed to the American judge, Mr. Justice Brandeis, is worth recalling:

“The irresistible is often only that which is not resisted” (cited by Isaiah Berlin in his 1953 L S E lecture on *Historical Inevitability*, p. 78.)

I wish to quote some remarkable words from a most unlikely witness, Bertrand Russell. In his notorious *Marriage and Morals*, Russell accurately foresaw, as many Catholic moral theologians did not foresee, that the introduction of contraception implied what he called an entirely new ethics of sexuality. In *The Scientific Attitude* (1931, 1954) he outlines some of the probable outcomes of the application of science to human problems, including the question of sex and reproduction. His predictions at the time had the character of science fiction, but they are now everyday matters of fact. He granted that his predictions were “not to be taken altogether as serious prophecy”; they are “visions of Cassandra.”

Russell himself was clearly disturbed by these possibilities; he saw them as possibilities “in a world governed by knowledge without love and power without delight.” He deplores the cult of “power for its own sake”; he fears those for whom “the fact that they can do something that no one previously thought it possible to do is a sufficient reason for doing it.”

They represent, he says, the world “which would result if scientific technique were to rule unchecked.” Russell sees, though without much hope, possible alternatives in a rediscovery of contemplation. He speaks of “the ecstasy of contemplations. He quotes: “In knowledge of God standeth our eternal life.” (*The Scientific Attitude*, esp. Ch. XVII, “Science and Values.”) Sadly, for Russell ecstasy can come only from human love, chiefly sexual love; and this does not provide the “peace that passes all understanding” which the human heart seeks, and which only God can give.

Pope John Paul, contemplative as well as pastor and teacher, brings us back in the end of *Evangelium*

*Vitae* to Christ, who alone has the words of eternal life, and to Mary, who kept all his words and pondered them in her heart. It is here that we find courage for the immense tasks which confront us as Catholics facing the moral crisis of our time. Like St. Paul:

“We are in difficulties on all sides, but never cornered; we see no answer to our problems, but never despair; we have been persecuted but never deserted; knocked down but never killed. ...So we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for the things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal.”  
(*Corinthians 4: 899 18*)

## Reflections in Holocaust Museum

While in Washington last month for a lecture, I visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum there. I am still haunted by the awful images of the “culture of death” which surround one as one goes from gallery to gallery of that Museum. The question that kept coming to me was this: “How could this happen in a modern, advanced, technologically highly developed European country in the middle of the 20th century? How could so many of the professional elites in such a country have tolerated this or even colluded in it? Could it happen here?” Our instinct is to reply immediately: “Impossible. Unthinkable”; but we need to pause and reflect. When sterilization, euthanasia, the elimination of the mentally or

physically handicapped and of eugenically inferior breeds, were introduced by the Nazis in 1935, shock waves of moral revulsion spread across the Western world. Moral sensitivities have profoundly changed since then. There is no universal moral revulsion now when euthanasia, sterilization, abortion, eugenic “breeding,” are discussed.

Professor Leibbrand, expert witness for the prosecution at the Nuremberg Trial of German doctors who conducted experiments on human beings in the Nazi regime, declared that the Nazis substituted the “biological idea” for the “metaphysical idea,” and that it was this that mentally conditioned doctors for their systematic medical experimentation on human beings, particularly prisoners, internees and others. There are disturbing signs of a similar substitution of the biological view of the human being for the metaphysical view, and much more for the Christian view, in some medical circles today. The proposed rewriting of the Hippocratic Oath would scarcely have been possible without such a shift of meanings and of values. The inscription on a pillar in the Chapel area in the Holocaust Museum reads:

“For the dead and the living we must bear witness.”

Much more must we bear witness to the Lord of life, who came and dwelt amongst us in order that we might have life and might have it to the full.

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## The Catholic Mission Today in Higher Education

Archbishop Francis E. George, O.M.I.  
*Georgetown University*  
*October 20, 1997*

I am grateful to President O'Donovan and to Dean Douglass for the invitation to participate in Georgetown University's lecture series “Centered Pluralism” and to address the topic, “The Catholic Mission in Higher Education.” I accepted with the hope that I might contribute in some manner to a conversation already far advanced on the mission of Catholic universities in this country. I join that conversation not as someone who spent a few very happy years teaching in

a Jesuit University nor even as a former card-carrying member of the American Association of University Professors; rather, I speak as a bishop of the Catholic Church, head of a local Church fortunate enough to count among its major Catholic institutions a number of excellent colleges and universities, including a Jesuit University.

In any conversation, it is as important to spell out presuppositions as it is to make propositions. My first presupposition is carried by the possessive pronoun “its” in the second to last sentence above. The Church's mission today in higher education is carried principally and most visibly, although not exclusively, by Catholic universities. There are Newman centers and other Catholic institutions on secular campuses, but a mission in higher education must imply and embrace research and teaching. There are seminaries, with many faculty

members who would qualify as professors in any university in this country; but they are seen as institutions whose principal mission is one of professional development and spiritual training of seminarians rather than higher education as such. There are Catholic scholars and teachers in private and state institutions in no way related to the Catholic Church. These professors' mission flows, of course, from their baptism; but it is not exercised in a context where the term "Catholic" carries anything but a personal commitment on their part.

Our conversation this evening presupposes that there are universities, Georgetown among them, which identify themselves as institutionally Catholic and who are now examining what that self-identification must mean. If the transfer in the last generation of a large number of Catholic universities to lay ownership means that they are now secular universities, which is sometimes argued by people both within Catholic universities and others outside them, then I would respectfully thank you for supper and ask to be excused. There is no point in continuing this conversation, and I would ask you to begin a different public conversation about the consequences for the Church and the erstwhile Catholic universities themselves of their having been secularized. I am presupposing here, however, that the Church indeed has universities, not in the sense that she has parishes or members, but in the sense that her mission, which is that of Jesus Christ, is somehow institutionally carried by them in the realm of higher education in this country.

### The Context

Exploring that "somehow" brings us into a complex and unique situation. In the United States, the Catholic Church has organized her ministries of healing, caring and teaching in institutions of healthcare, social services and education which are unparalleled in Church history. Positively, besides the Church's healing, serving and teaching people in Jesus' name, these institutions allow the Church and

her members to be actors of importance in each of these areas, able to influence to some extent public discourse and public policy. Negatively, it can be argued that the Church has been co-opted by merely replicating patterns of institutionalization that are not her own, not totally consistent with an ethos born of faith.. Parallel institutions are judged to be not only "in" the world, as they must be, but are now "of" the world in a way that leaves them unable to foster Christ's mission to the world. The status of Catholic hospitals and health care delivery systems, of Catholic Charities and social services therefore creates, in part, the context of tonight's conversation on the Catholic mission in higher education, at least in my own mind. Bishops are involved, as are sponsoring religious orders and congregations, in different ways, in conversations about all these institutions.

The fact of Catholic universities' being truly and rightfully in the world is being examined now in the light of a renewed sense of the Church's teaching, mission to the world and with a certain urgency because of the history of religiously sponsored universities in this country. Often enough in recent years it has been pointed out to Catholics that Harvard University's original seal surrounded the word *Veritas* by *pro Christo et Ecclesia*. What happened? The history of the relationship of Congregationalism, and then Unitarianism, to higher education is less germane to our conversation tonight than is the increased involvement after the Second World War of government and business in higher education. Their involvement has been intensified by the desire of free market enterprise for the knowledge needed to fuel global scientific and technological expansion. Government and business entered a type of unwritten affiliation with higher education. Foundations were created, often the charitable consequences of entrepreneurial success, and they had and have the ability to funnel significant funds into the world of higher education. The purposes of government, of business and charitable foundations are most often secular; and dependency upon them for growth and even survival inevitably has had a secularizing

influence on the universities themselves. In the light of this history, the protestations of academic virginity which are regularly trotted out in discussions between university personnel and bishops, the cries that any official Church influence would inevitably tarnish the pristine purity of the university, ring, I must confess, somewhat hollow in my perhaps too-cynical ears.

In this recent historical context, discussions between university and church officials are marked also by significant documents. The Land O'Lakes Statement of 1967 called for the autonomy of the Catholic university and a sense of academic freedom no different from that of secular universities. In 1972, a document similar in its argument, "The Catholic University in the Modern World," was approved by the International Federation of Catholic Universities. It would be fair, I believe, to say that these documents called for a "mitigated secularization" of Catholic higher education. While retaining their Catholic identity, those institutions that followed the direction given by these documents were separated from their juridic attachment to the Church. Directed and, in some instances, even owned by lay boards, such schools had a largely moral or spiritual relationship with the Church and to the charism of the sponsoring religious congregation that had founded them.

At the same time, the bishops of the Church were engaged in their own reflections on the Church's mission to teach and on the ministry of higher education. In 1966, the Second Vatican Council passed its Declaration on Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*; in 1979, the apostolic constitution *Sapientia Christiana* was issued for ecclesiastical faculties; and in 1980, the bishops of the United States wrote a pastoral letter called, "Catholic Higher Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church." In 1985, the Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education initiated a formal consultation on a draft schema for a papal document on Catholic universities. After extensive consultation and several other drafts, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was issued in September 1990. In response to this document, the bishops and Catholic

university presidents in the United States have been talking about the ordinances that apply the general norms of *Ex Corde* to the educational situation in this country. These conversations have vastly improved the level of trust and communication between the U.S. bishops and the university presidents, but they have left untouched relations between bishops and boards and bishops and faculty.

Although I have not been an active participant in these discussions, it seems they have arrived at the outlines of what might be described as a broad external consensus on the nature and mission of Catholic higher education. The four essential characteristics of "every Catholic institution, as Catholic," in *Ex Corde* are, in fact, taken directly from the 1972 statement of the International Federation of Catholic Universities. They are:

1. "A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. "A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which the university seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. "Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church.
4. "An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life."

I believe that most bishops and presidents support these proposals as a description of the Catholic university from outside their own institution. This consensus is encouraging. But when application of them is to shape the interior life of our colleges and universities, the conversation becomes both necessary and increasingly difficult of resolution.

## Problems in the Context

Conversation now is necessary not simply because of external pressure from the Holy See but because the arrangements of the last 30 years are proving to be unstable it is ever

clearer that the religious communities which had remained present as members of administration and faculty and served as the bearers of institutional memory and purpose after the disengagements of the '70s are a diminishing presence in the '90s. Students are also changing. In some universities, especially in graduate schools, most students are not Catholic. Even where Catholic students are a majority, many do not bring a Catholic mindset or Catholic ethos to the campus. Their faith might be Catholic, but it is inchoate and not intentional. There are also groups of students on Catholic university campuses who want a much clearer Catholic institutional identity. Many faculty, hired without much attention to their supposedly embracing and participating in a Catholic mission, are bemused by the discussion and others are apprehensive. As new faculty replace those who negotiated the "mitigated secularization" of the last generation retire, some take a fresh look at the current situation and ask whether the price of engagement with the world on terms set by government, business and the foundations has been perhaps too great.

Catholic identity projects and papers like your Centered Pluralism document elicit some excellent responses and create a climate where lectures such as this are acceptable, but the feeling remains in many Catholic universities that the center isn't holding. Authoritarian interventions, whether from outside the academy or by the university authorities themselves, will create resistance which can only make matters worse; but without a vision in continuity with that of the founders, major Catholic universities risk further reducing pluralism in American higher education by becoming like so many of their academic partners: high-class trade schools. It is a good thing to be a high-class trade school, providing job training for sophisticated professionals who want to live at the service of others. But such universities are without a coherent vision other than that given by the various disciplines and professions which constitute their departments and schools; and education without an integrating vision is not Catholic.

Resolving the tensions of the present moment in this historical context is made more difficult by some of the only partially examined presuppositions of academic culture, particularly those presuppositions which are anti-ecclesial. A constant presupposition in the conversation about the Catholic mission in higher education today holds that reason itself can be enlightened by faith, that the medievals were insightful when they declared, *Credo ut intelligam*. If this presupposition cedes to another that faith is inevitably the enemy of reason, our conversation tonight will be silenced. Few in a Catholic university might state boldly that faith destroys reason, but there is a logic of institutions which carries assumptions not always made explicit but still powerful in shaping a conversation. As a social milieu the university, like any other institution, both shapes and limits intellectual inquiry. Do university structures themselves tend to push to the side any integrating vision, especially one based on faith?

The dominant feature of the contemporary university's organization is the department devoted to a particular discipline. It makes specialization possible and controls the reward system for professors and students. From time to time, regrets about the absence of a common vision for the university or of genuinely interdisciplinary thinking prompt the establishment of a course of study in a field rather than in a discipline, but fields are not often taken seriously. Advancement in the university milieu is not possible except within the departmental reward system. Requirements for courses and degrees are the moats defending the departmental castle, the forts protecting the discipline's turf. Talking across disciplines often means bargaining about how large a chunk of a much-diminished core curriculum can be captured by each department. Conversation about what reason itself might require an educated person to know is rare. Rarer still, outside a Catholic university, is talk about what reason open to enlightenment by faith might suggest about education.

Further, the social structure of the university not only defends interests; it also canonizes values.

It insists, for example, that dogmatism stifles truth, but it will not acknowledge that pluralism can obscure truth. Its primary value, since the Age of Enlightenment, is Cartesian doubt masquerading as critical intelligence. Its founding myth is that of the solitary and courageous intellectual taking, on obscurantist and authoritarian systems of all sorts.

In this milieu, there is silence about ultimates, unless they can be treated as the foundations of academic disciplines or traced to private choices. Pluralism as an ideal makes even academics hesitate to speak in what could be labeled divisive or contrary to the spirit of completely open-ended discourse. Faith then, of course, is no longer the basis of life but something added to it. Reason becomes so narrowly conceived that dialogue with faith is difficult and enlightenment by faith nearly impossible. If, because a university is Catholic in its foundation and heritage, dialogue with faith remains something to be pursued, the logic of the modern university responds with a department of theology. The professional theologians who staff this department might very well admit that theology draws on faith for its data and that faith is intrinsically related to the Church's teaching authority, but even the presence of such a clear-headed department leaves moot the question of how an entire university might draw on faith for illumination. And if, alas, the theology department's of achieving parity of academic prestige with other departments by disavowing any connection between its discipline and the community of faith, then it becomes even less useful as a primary carrier of the Catholic university's mission in higher education.

Historically among the liberal arts, and even in the Jesuit *ratio studiorum*, the study of theology has integrated the Catholic university's curriculum and has played the role in the Catholic university that philosophy was to play in Plato's Republic: by giving access to knowledge of the highest sort, it integrates thought and speech and life by grounding all of these architectonically in the sources or natures of things. Classically, freedom in the academic republic was to preserve not an

individual professor's freedom of self-expression but the discipline itself which, in preserving the truth of things, makes our personal freedom possible. In contrast to philosophy, poetry is banished from the Republic because it has no standards. Poetic speech is always innovative. This is not without personal benefit, of course, but it cannot integrate, cannot govern. For the sake of generating discussion by making an outrageous statement, I would suggest that when theology becomes religious studies, it transforms itself, in Plato's scheme of things, from philosophy to poetry. The study of religious literature of all sorts and the examination of one's religious experience are not without personal benefit, of course, but they cannot integrate a course of study and have no particular claim to inclusion in a Catholic university's core curriculum.

### **The Bishop: Part of the Solution**

Reviewing the contemporary conversation about the Church's mission in higher education with some of its institutional and cultural presuppositions has, I hope, cleared enough conceptual space to insert a proposal which is obvious, I believe, but which has not been much pursued. The proposal is that clarity about the Catholic university's mission cannot be achieved without going behind university and Church and asking first about the claims of faith. The normal understanding of faith, any revealed faith, is that it unites us to God. Examining the claims of faith on an academic community identifying itself as Catholic forces us, first of all, to confess what kind of God we believe in and worship.

All of us in this country live in the shadow of a Puritan god. A Puritan god is very clear about right and wrong and declares his will in Scripture read as a code. A Puritan god does not, however, distinguish very clearly between a person and his or her actions. If the action is wrong, the person acting is bad. A Puritan god can give laws and, perhaps, create a society; but a Puritan god cannot create an authentically human culture. A university which worships a Puritan god will have a clear organizational structure and laws and insurance to

cover every contingency, but it will not be a place where faith becomes culture, as *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* says a Catholic university should be. It will never be a place where the ethos of faith outlines directions which do not have to be legally negotiated and are not resented as intrusions on individual or institutional autonomy because they are simply second nature to believers.

The Puritan god's brother (or sister) is a therapeutic god. The therapeutic god also has a hard time distinguishing between a person and his or her actions and therefore never condemns an action for fear of hurting a person. The therapeutic god is the reverse image of the Puritan god and, in accepting everyone and everything, has no sense of discrimination and no personality of his or her own. A university that worships a therapeutic god cannot create a dialogue between faith and culture, nor between faith and anything, because faith in such a god has no proper configuration. Urging everyone to openness exhausts all of god's resources.

The Catholic God is the Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. God is an agent, an actor in human affairs who calls us to see the university and the world and all its works through the eyes of a crucified Savior; faith is a vision, a way of seeing things. St Paul asks with the prophet Isaiah: "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" And he answers Isaiah's and his question: But we have the mind of Christ (... *de noun Christou exomen*) (I Cor. 2,16). A mind, a *nous*, a vision of things makes truth claims; but its warrants and rules of evidence are different from those for physics. The truths are always self-referential, but, in Catholic faith, referential to the community and not to isolated individuals who just happen to be within it. Christ, whom John portrays claiming to be himself the truth, left not a set of personal memoirs nor a training manual but a community with an embryonic governing and teaching and sanctifying structure which Vatican II describes as a hierarchical communion. A university that worships the Catholic God cannot separate itself from the community of faith, both local

and universal. Therefore, squarely within the Catholic vision of things, central to the life and mission of the ecclesial faith community, is the office of bishop as head of a local or particular Church and teacher of the Catholic faith. I would respectfully suggest, therefore, that the office of bishop is not a problem in understanding the Catholic mission in higher education; rather, the office of bishop is part of the solution.

This is an impossible claim if there is no objective truth that is knowable to us, relates us to one another, and provides a basis for the building of community. Knowledge, in the vision of faith, is an aspect, a dimension of being a human person with a destiny, and its purpose is to make possible the transformation of someone into a person of virtue and character. By contrast, contemporary secular understandings of knowledge would entertain great skepticism about personal truth being able to be objective and knowable by all humanity. Relativism and nominalism in human affairs are an unnecessary but too frequent consequence of respect for the truths of the hard sciences. Relativism and nominalism in human affairs are perhaps an inevitable consequence of treating data relevant to a particular field of study as property, capable of being put to any use by its owner.

How, then, is the bishop necessarily within the Catholic university? How does he contribute to understanding how Catholic universities carry the Church's mission in higher education? The bishop is in the Catholic university neither as a watchdog nor an academic lawgiver; not primarily as a healer or caregiver nor even as a point of reference for the chaplain's office; not as a teacher of theology, unless he happens also to have an academic appointment, and not as just one more member of the Board. The bishop is within the Catholic university as teacher of the faith.

This claim presupposes that there is a distinction between faith and any particular theological formulation which gives it voice. While every expression of the faith is theological, the *sensus fidei* distinguishes between those theological theses and directions which are useful in expressing the faith

authentically and those which betray it. The magisterium judges theological opinions in the light of the certitude of faith. The distinction between faith and theology is itself a matter for theological reflection; but the ability to draw the distinction makes it possible to bring the bishop into the university as a teacher without his being a professor in any particular department.

How should this relationship between the bishop as teacher of the Catholic faith and the Catholic university community be formalized? The Church is not a tyranny; she is ruled by her own law and in the context of the civil law of each country. The proper legal formulation to support the relationship between the faith community and its universities is now being discussed elsewhere, and I do not want to prejudice those discussions in any way by making suggestions here.

There are, however, ways of being present as teacher which do not depend directly upon legal formulas. A regular episcopal sermon in the university Church would bring the bishop's teaching, magisterium into the heart of the university. Structured discussions with the students about their beliefs and with the faculty about their sense of mission would acknowledge the bishop's role as head of the local faith community and bring what could be an invigorating addition to both the bishop's and the university's life. Since the mission of the university is carried primarily by the faculty, contact between faculty and bishop, structured availability of the bishop to the faculty in other than purely social or ceremonial fora would seem to be crucial. Parents and students themselves look to a Catholic university with a justified expectation that here, among the teaching faculty, there will be many professors in whom the personal dialogue between faith and reason has created a mind free because it is subservient to the truth. If the U.S. bishops formed a kind of accrediting association, which is as American as apple pie, and a tool for many disciplines and professions, such an association could be useful to a local bishop in fulfilling his responsibilities to a Catholic university in the diocese he serves and could help the univer-

sity itself find direction in its sense of mission. It could also, in an ongoing, and non-confrontational way, bring the university into conversation with the body that defines the content of the word "Catholic," and gives any institution the right to use the name.

Finally, the mission of the Church has, in its heart, the desire to evangelize, to share the truths of the Gospel as widely as possible. Understandably, university officials and faculty shy away from including evangelization in their mission. The word in English sounds much like "evangelism," which sometimes carries resonances of a proselytism that insults the intelligence. However, on the occasion of Georgetown's 200th anniversary, the present superior general of the Society of Jesus said here that evangelization is part of a Catholic university's purpose. And the Second Vatican Council taught clearly that evangelization is the responsibility of all the baptized. What could be more appropriate for baptized intellectuals than to accept responsibility for the evangelization of reason as such? Our society lives with an impoverished, instrumentalist sense of reason; we can know more than our culture tells us we can. The Catholic university, because here faith restores to reason a confidence in its own ability to know the truth of things, should work to restore to civil society a sense of reason which can undergird open inquiry, public order and individual liberty. The university could model a use of reason which enables all to speak publicly about the common good as well as about individual rights. In an age and place where the ultimate question seems to be: Is it liberal or conservative?, the university should raise the truly ultimate rational question: Is it true or false? And why?

Both Athens, the home of reason, and Jerusalem, the home of faith, had a clear sense of mission. Socrates of Athens raised questions which forced his respondents to give reasons for their beliefs. "A man who has knowledge," Socrates says in the *Phaedo* (76b), "would be able to give an account (*logos*) of what he knows." In his conversation with Euthyphro (6b), Socrates even

claims that if one cannot define piety, cannot give an adequate and universal explanation of it, he cannot be sure that he is acting piously. Socrates' mission was to show how reason is expressed in human action. If he had been a modern or even a post-modern man, Socrates would have wanted to feel piety rather than define it. Experience is most telling when feelings are mutual, and even God's presence is certain for moderns mainly through the evidence of the emotions.

In contrast to both Socrates' classical sense of human reason and the modern insistence on personal subjectivity to authenticate beliefs, Peter of Jerusalem told his followers that they should be prepared to give an account (logos) of the hope that is in them (I Pt. 3, 15). The logos that Peter referred to is, in the final instance, a Person, the eternal Word of God, the ultimate explanation

of our life, our movement and our being.

In the innermost heart of the Catholic university should lie the desire, not always explicitly expressed nor completely shared by everyone in the university itself, to help create an academic milieu, a civil society and a Church where personal faith in Christ makes good sense. There is a longing to show, by canons of public discourse, that it is reasonable, although not logically necessary, to surrender oneself to the eternal logos incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. The Catholic university finds the foundation of its mission in the vocation to point as clearly and persuasively as possible to a Person who invites us to join our minds and hearts to his, so that we can appreciate more fully what Socrates of Athens wanted to explain and understand more deeply what Peter of Jerusalem dearly loved.

## Letter from Cardinal Hickey

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*Archdiocese of Washington  
5001 Eastern Avenue  
Post Office Box 29260  
Washington, D.C. 20017  
Office of the Archbishop  
June 9, 1997*

Rev. Lawrence J. Madden, S.J.  
*Pastor  
Holy Trinity Church  
3513 N Street, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20007-2622*

Dear Father Madden:

During the past few months, Bishop Lori has met with you concerning a wide range of issues at Holy Trinity Parish. Those meetings were occasioned by your letter to him, dated February 24, 1997, recounting certain liturgical and sacramental irregularities which occurred at Holy Trinity Par-

ish on "Unity Sunday," January 19, 1997. As you recall, Bishop Lori discussed those problems when he met with you on March 12, 1997. He met also with Father McCarren and Father Peduti to discuss their role in the problematic "Unity Sunday" Masses.

On April 16, 1997, and again on April 23, 1997, Bishop Lori met with you concerning a wide variety of difficulties at Holy Trinity. These two meetings were held in the presence of Msgr. Bernard Gerhardt, Chancellor, and Fr. Clement J. Petrik, S.J., a member of the Provincial's staff.

As you may recall, Bishop Lori described those meetings as a "structured conversation." Prior to those meetings, you were informed that they would be recorded and that a transcript would be made. You were invited to bring Father Petrik as a representative of the Provincial. In addition, those meetings were organized around specific points culled from the Archdiocesan archives and from other sources. Their purpose was to obtain accurate information and thus determine what specific problems at Holy Trinity needed to be addressed. Let me add that, at the

conclusion of these meetings, Bishop Lori sent you the transcript and invited you to make any changes you felt appropriate.

I have received also your letter of May 2, 1997, addressed to Bishop Lori, which followed up on certain points raised in the conversations in his office. Finally, I note that your significant and helpful letter of May 22, 1997, also addressed to Bishop Lori, is a part of this same record.

After reviewing all the data described, I now bring to your attention a number of general and specific observations, together with directives for addressing the problems which have been determined as having a basis in fact.

### General Observations

1) Holy Trinity Parish is a vital and vibrant parish community. I recognize its many strengths in the areas of liturgy, music, preaching, social concerns and education of adults and young people. I also recognize the creativity, enthusiasm and generosity of those who are part of your parish, including clergy, staff and parishioners.

2) Let me also recognize the leadership you have brought to Holy Trinity. Yours is a very challenging parish. When you began your service as pastor, we discussed both strengths and weaknesses. You have shown a willingness to cooperate with the Archdiocese and to participate in its life. For that I am truly grateful.

3) As I am sure you will agree, a healthy parish is rooted firmly in the life of the larger church. This includes a close and loving union with the Holy Father and a true communion of love with the local bishop. That communion with the wider Church includes the acceptance of Church teaching, including those points, which may be difficult for many to accept. It includes acceptance of the God-given teaching role of the Holy Father and the bishops in communion with him. Dissent is neither an authentic theological source nor a font of spirituality.

Parish leadership at all levels has a serious obligation to help form people in the authentic faith of the Church—not in various theological

theories or enthusiasms.

4) At the same time, it is important for everyone to clearly understand that Holy Trinity is not an experimental parish. As I have already indicated, creativity is an important strength for parish priests and leaders. The Church's rich heritage of faith, worship and service offers many avenues for authentic creativity. The liturgy itself provides for creative approaches. However, creativity falters when it is pursued in violation of Church teaching, canonical discipline or liturgical regulations. Moreover, I do not sanction an "elastic" approach to Church discipline, namely, small, incremental violations of Church discipline that aim at a gradual shift in Church praxis.

5) Please know that I respect the decrees, which have emerged from the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. As you recall, you cited Nos. 9, 13, 14 and 19 in your April 3, 1997, letter addressed to myself. Those decrees pertain, *inter alia*, to ecumenism, the role of the laity and the role of women. I am sure you understand that the objectives outlined in those decrees are not to be pursued in violation of Church teachings or discipline.

6) As your May 22, 1997, letter indicates, it is important for parish clergy and staff to be well-versed in Church teaching and discipline. In addition to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, this also includes *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Code of Canon Law*, the *Ecumenical Directory*, various liturgical directives from the Holy See and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the *Sacramental Norms and Policies* of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Parish priests and parish staff must know and accept the Church's discipline and understand the reasons that underlie it. No one in a position of parish leadership, especially a priest, should plead "ignorance of the law."

7) As pastor, you are charged with staff development. As you have observed, it will be important for you to devote more time and attention to developing your staff in their understanding and acceptance of Church teaching and discipline.

8) It is good to know that a group of 50 or so parishioners are meeting to discuss some of the difficulties which have surfaced. I ask that you provide this group with sound pastoral leadership and lead them truly “to think with the Church.”

9) Let me commend Holy Trinity School and Religious Education program for following the directives of the Archdiocese with regard to religion textbooks and other policies.

## Particular Observations and Findings

### A. Ecumenical Matters

1) On at least two occasions, non-Catholic ministers have been invited to preach at Sunday Eucharist. While accepting the good will of all parties, I find that those invitations were improper and should not have been offered. Non-Catholic ministers are not to deliver the homily in the context of the Eucharist.

2) The question has arisen about the propriety of inviting non-Catholic ministers to deliver “scriptural reflections” in the context of Sunday Mass after the Post-Communion prayer. Such a procedure is problematical and I ask that it be discontinued. I also ask that you and your staff explore other ways to observe the Church Unity Octave (cf. *infra*, #5).

3) I also acknowledge and accept your pledge to “. . . make clear to the staff that in the case of weddings and funerals no one but a priest or deacon may be invited to preach.” This action on your part will prevent improper invitations to non-Catholics and lay persons to preach on such occasions.

4) It has been established that Holy Communion was improperly offered to the two Protestant ministers who visited Holy Trinity on “Unity Sunday.” Furthermore, it was highly improper for Fathers McCarren and Peduti to invite them to distribute Holy Communion. I gratefully accept the public apology, which you and these two priests have made concerning this serious breach of the Church’s Eucharistic faith and discipline.

I also accept the promise of yourself, Father McCarren and Father Peduti that such aberrations will not occur again.

5) You indicated that you would contact Bishop Lori as plans for the 1998 “Unity Sunday” celebration take shape. I urge you do so long before those plans are finalized so that appropriate adjustments, if needed, can be made in timely fashion.

6) I ask you to carry forward your plan to study with your staff the Church’s documents on ecumenism and the Eucharist. That study should include the Documents of Vatican II, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Code of Canon Law*, the *Ecumenical Directory* and the *Sacramental Norms and Policies* of the Archdiocese of Washington.

7) Let me commend you for your promise to review with your staff “a full presentation of the Church’s reasons” for the teaching and practice with respect to ecumenical Eucharistic sharing. Let me also highlight your statement: “I will make clear to the staff that our own experience of friendship with non-Catholic ministers and our desire to be hospitable must not override our responsibility to be representatives of the Catholic Church and its teachings.”

### B. Lay Preaching and Presiding

1) Bishop Lori discussed with you the various instances of lay preaching and presiding at Holy Trinity Parish. Instances of this include the 1997 Ash Wednesday Service at which Dr. Linda Arnold presided and preached, as well as a 1993 “Reconciliation Series” at which a number of lay men and women presided and preached. It is my understanding that similar services took place in subsequent years as well.

2) In your May 22, 1997, letter, you indicated that you “heard” Bishop Lori’s concern with regard to the reconciliation services. As you recall, Bishop Lori noted that some reconciliation services at which lay persons presided and preached included the sacrament of penance. They were the near equivalent of a “Form II” Penance Service.

The Bishop was rightly concerned that such an arrangement blurs the priest's role as the minister of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I regard it as a grave abuse for any lay person to preside over and preach at such a service.

3) The Bishop also expressed concern over lay preaching in the context of Mass, sacramental celebrations and Vespers. He cited both Canon 767 and the authentic interpretation of that Canon by the Holy See.

4) In view of those concerns, which I fully share, I appreciate and accept your pledge that "...there will be no preaching at any liturgical service (eg., Vespers) by anyone other than a priest or deacon."

### C. Inclusive Language

1) In your meetings with Bishop Lori, it was determined that both the Scriptural readings and the Mass texts are regularly modified at Holy Trinity to make them more "gender inclusive." This also extends to the hymns sung during liturgical services.

2) You indicated that Margaret Costello, the parish liturgy director, is responsible for most of these modifications. You said that these changes are mainly confined to "horizontal" language and do not extend to "vertical language"—that is, the names for God. You indicated that the proper names of God, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit," are retained for sacramental formulae and blessings. Nonetheless, you indicated that, at times, the personal pronoun "He," and the possessive adjective "His"—when these refer to God or to Jesus—are replaced. In addition, your music director, Mr. William Usher, indicated that "Father" could be replaced with other images of God since fatherhood is "a painful image" for many people today. You expressed disagreement with Mr. Usher on that point and subsequently clarified that his role is confined to the texts of hymns.

3) It was further established that the "Canadian Lectionary" is employed on a regular basis at Holy Trinity. In addition, you indicated that the parish is already using new translations of the

Sacramentary, produced by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy and currently awaiting approval from Rome.

4) In the April 23, 1997 meeting, Bishop Lori cited an extreme abuse of so-called "inclusive language"—a recasting of the Confiteor and the Misereatur. You indicated that form was used at Holy Trinity on one occasion before you became pastor. You also indicated that you regard such a re-formulation as unacceptable.

5) Finally you expressed your belief that you had special leeway from myself to experiment with inclusive language.

6) In response to these findings, I must indicate:

a) I have given no permission for experimentation with inclusive language at Holy Trinity Parish. Neither the clergy nor any member of your staff is authorized to change Scriptural translations or Mass texts.

b) The Canadian Lectionary is not authorized for use in the United States. It is no longer to be used at Holy Trinity, effective immediately.

c) Only those translations of the Sacramentary approved by the NCCB and the Holy See are to be used at Holy Trinity, effective immediately.

d) Extreme care should be taken with respect to the modification of hymn texts. As you are well aware, hymns are an integral part of our worship and must not undermine the Church's understanding of revelation.

### D. Understanding of the Eucharist

1) I am very grateful for your attentiveness to Bishop Lori's concern about the need "...to reinforce in the faithful the Church's belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

2) It is important that extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist be well trained in the Church's teaching on the Eucharist. Thank you for the steps you shall take to strengthen their training and their faith—especially with the use of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

### E. The Ordination of Women

I know that vocal dissent against the Church's teaching at Holy Trinity on the ordination of women has been both public and painful. I urge you to do all you can to help those you serve to open their minds and hearts to the Church's authentic and authoritative teaching on ordination of women.

### F. Further Steps

I have directed Bishop Lori to schedule a parish visitation in the fall of 1997. In the course of this visitation, he will discuss the points outlined in this letter with you and the other priests at Holy Trinity, as well as the staff. He will inquire about your systematic efforts to correct the doctrinal, disciplinary and pastoral problems cited here. He will

want to know the specific measures you have taken and their effect.

After receiving that report I shall review the state of Holy Trinity Parish early in 1998. At that time, I shall make a determination about the future leadership needs, both clerical and lay, of the parish. If the problems cited here are not effectively addressed, I am prepared to bring about necessary changes; but I pray that will not be necessary.

Thank you, Father Madden, for your cooperation throughout this long and difficult process. I assure you of my prayers for you and for your service to the Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

+James Cardinal Hickey  
Archbishop of Washington

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*

by Robert Barron  
New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1996. Pp. 178. \$14.95.  
ISBN: 0-8245-2507-8

Reviewed by Michael Waddell  
*University of Notre Dame*

In *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, Robert Barron reminds us that St. Thomas's theology is as spiritually edifying as it is intellectually rewarding.

Barron's interpretation of Aquinas's theology keeps central the notion that Thomas was, "in all things, a saint," and refuses to separate Thomas's spiritual quest for union with God from his scholastic exercises in theology.

Barron understands well that, for Thomas, faith and *sacra doctrina* bestow a share of God's own self-knowledge, anticipating our beatific union with Him. Thomas's scientific theology is, thus, fundamentally an expression of the human capacity and hunger for union with God. According to Barron, Thomas's principal icon for understanding and fulfilling this capacity is Jesus Christ, in whom humanity and divinity are perfectly united. Barron thus enlists himself with those who take Thomas's theology to be centrally Christological. This identification of Aquinas's theology with the spiritual quest for communion with God through Christ undergirds Barron's belief

that Thomas's theology is a spiritual endeavor. It is also the center around which Barron organizes the four chapters of his book.

In chapter one, he considers Thomas's Christology, picturing Christ as the miraculous union of God with man, the icon that simultaneously depicts God's radical otherness and teaches us to find our individual perfection in intimate union with Him. Barron develops the theme of God's transcendence in chapter two, where he considers Thomas's teaching on the Divine Nature, and suggests that we should have a Christ-like response to it. No less awe inspiring than the Divine Nature, Barron argues in chapter three,

is the fact of creation. As Thomas understood it, creation is nothing less than our complete dependence on God for everything at every moment. Now, the very fact that we are created by God means that we have a vestige of Him in us. In the final chapter, Barron considers the implications of Thomas's scripturally-based teaching that we are made in God's image: we cannot be fulfilled until we return to our divine Source, until we are in loving and obedient communion with God, as Christ is.

During his years of study and pastoral activity, Robert Barron has clearly ruminated on Thomas's texts, digested them, and made them his own. He weaves a narrative that incorporates Thomas's voice alongside influential 20th-century theologians like Tillich and Von Balthasar, and spiritual guides like John of the Cross and Thomas Merton. What emerges is an original and edifying interpretation of Thomas's works. Consider his treatment of the famous "five ways." To Barron, these are not merely metaphysical arguments. They are the cajolings of a spiritual director urging his charges to recognize and pursue the transcendent

God of revelation, upon Whom we depend for existing and acting, and from Whom it is mere self-delusion to flee. Indeed, for Barron, the whole *Summa Theologiae* is a process of give and take between spiritual master and protégée. The dialectic movements from objection to *sed contra*, and from corpus to response are not only intellectual counter-arguments; they represent the student's subtle rejections of the spiritual attitude proposed by the master, followed by the teacher's gentle corrections, and the patient repetition of the process.

Of course, as something is digested, it loses its own identity and becomes the person digesting it. Occasionally one wonders whether Barron's Thomas has ceased to be Thomas and become merely the voice of Barron. Certain Protestant interlocutors have clearly affected his presentation of Thomas's thought. Anyone who has read Paul Tillich's work will recognize his influence on Barron and on Barron's Aquinas. In fact, Barron often cites Tillich. Other voices are more difficult to name, but Barron himself alludes to Protestant critics (including Luther?) who have derogated Thomas's works as

arid speculation and condemned them for not being sufficiently focused on Christ. A well-intentioned desire to defend Thomas against this latter charge might explain Barron's own assertion that Thomas's theology is centrally Christological. It is, nevertheless, a claim that has only recently surfaced in Thomistic circles and that many authoritative commentators deny. Father Chenu and Father Torrell, for example, both assert the *Trinitarian* focus of Thomas's theology. Barron's over assessment of Christ's centrality in Thomas's work likely misconstrues Thomas's focus and certainly puts him at odds with leading Thomistic scholars.

Still, Barron's *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master* merits reading. The author expresses himself in a readable style and makes Thomas's theology accessible for those who are not expert. For those who are expert, he provides a reminder that Thomas's theology was meant to be edifying as well as astute. While the book comprises a useful introduction for beginners, those who are familiar with Thomas's texts and the manner in which they are usually presented will best appreciate its contribution.

## Martha's Vineyard

Ralph McInerney

If you had your pick of pagans who might throw light on what is good and bad about American higher education at the end of the second millennium you probably would not settle on Seneca. If you were going to propose a reform of liberal education, you probably would not ignore St. Augustine, Cassiodorus Senator, Boethius and the long monastic tradition that culminates in the chartering of universities in the 13th century, universities that arise, as John Paul II has put it, *ex corde ecclesiae*, out of the heart of the Church. If so, you are different from Martha Nussbaum. In *Cultivating Humanity* (Harvard, 1997) she provides an apologia of sorts for the very features of secular higher education that have caused others concern. More importantly for my purposes here, she seeks to enlist the Pope in her neo-pagan vision of education as aimed at world citizenship.

If I were looking for as good a defense of current social and moral and educational trends as could be devised, I would not go beyond this book. This is about as good as it gets. But then, the sun also rises. "Do not think that I am much impressed by that as a boxing title," as Hemingway's Jake says of the middleweight championship that Robert Cohn won at Princeton.

Others will deal with Nussbaum's proposal as it applies to the secular and secularized

schools of the nation. My interest is confined to the pat on the head that she awards my own university. "You've come a long way, baby," is the general idea. Notre Dame, more or less despite its religious origins, is a place where something like higher education in the Nussbaumian sense may yet occur. That she finds a source of her optimism in proceedings of the faculty senate is perhaps symptomatic, but she has also been helped in her credentialing of Our Lady's University by willing accomplices on campus who provided her with reports, let her sit in on classes, and the like. Like her, they seem willing to replace an outlook and principles devised over centuries with the latter-day liberalism that presides over the chaos around us.

Nussbaum is reluctantly aware that many of the great American universities had religious origins, and if many have outgrown them, others have not. She cites seminaries, but then notes that there are some "full-scale colleges and universities" which, though religious, offer a liberal arts education and even some forms of graduate education. How does she cope with this?

The context she provides is a "nation defined by liberal ideals of religious toleration, free exercise of religion and nonestablishment of religion." She adds unctuously, "Our liberal-democratic tradition views itself not as an enemy of religion but as its vigilant protector." Some of her best friends are believers. But her point is clear. Religious universi-

ties like all others must prepare citizens for a culture defined by the liberal ideals she has cited. One thinks of Scott-King's judgment on modern Europe. Nussbaum seems to think that the private universities in this country are somehow the fruit of our constitutional traditions, as if central planning had something to do with their coming into existence.

Western education in its origins is defined in terms of the relation between secular and sacred learning. The liberal arts tradition grew up at a time when the arts of the trivium and quadrivium were taken to be an adequate summary of secular education. Sacred learning had its source in Scripture. The great dialectic of medieval education lay in the interaction between faith and reason, philosophy and theology. It is to this tradition that a university like Notre Dame looks. And needless to say it is to this that John Paul II looks. He cannot be invoked in the way that Nussbaum does, as if he were simply signing on to her vision of things. He cannot be used as a means of countering such resistance to her proposal as may still survive on Catholic campuses.

What Nussbaum and her correspondents seem to foresee is the application to the Catholic campus of the liberal ideals that obtain in the wider society. This is the condition the church must meet if she chooses "to enter the world of the modern university." Above all, this means that academic freedom, in her sense, must obtain.

When a little band of French

missionaries showed up on a lake shore in Northern Indiana in 1842 and started what they called Université de Notre Dame du Lac, they saw what they were beginning as in continuity with what was done on the continent of their origin. Against much adversity, the institution survived. Its aim was to educate Catholics in secular and sacred learning, to equip them for this life and to increase their understanding of the faith. Its centenary was celebrated, then its sesquicentenary. Comes now Martha Nussbaum to point out that Notre Dame exists in a nation driven by liberal ideals vis-a-vis religious faith. Any and every faith is tolerated, none is established, all are freely exercised. So far so good. But her proposal is that these ideals must now become the internal ideals of Notre Dame. Moreover, she invokes magisterial documents to make her point. If she is right, religion is going to have to become privatized in private universities, all manner of beliefs and outlooks must be given *droit de la cité*, and any effort to exclude them will be a betrayal of what is meant by a university.

Now, in the wider world that Martha Nussbaum inhabits, the way of regarding human sexuality has undergone a radical change. She herself is prissily antinomian in this area. Everything gets her *imprimatur*; whatever you do, *nihil obstat*. Sexual relations in and out of marriage, in and out of one's gender, are allegedly engaged in with insouciance. What a generation ago was a perversion is now a life style. Disapproval of sexual

aberrations is identified as homophobia, suggesting that it is a mental illness to disapprove what until quite recently was universally recognized as a mental illness. It is a topsy-turvy world out there. Moral relativism, even nihilism, may seem to be right over the horizon if not already arrived. So let us take, as she does, the question of homosexuality.

The appraisal of homosexual activity from the point of view of Catholic morality is clear to anyone guided by the teaching Church. One would think then that activities permitted on secular campuses that accept Nussbaum's interpretation of liberal principles would not be permitted on such a campus as Notre Dame. No wonder Nussbaum draws attention to a 21-4-2 vote by the Notre Dame faculty senate deploring the administration's action in denying to a homosexual organization the rights and privileges enjoyed by other student groups. The administration no doubt thought it was preserving a Catholic moral atmosphere at Notre Dame. With relish Nussbaum quotes from the senate resolution deploring the administration's action as "discriminatory against a group of Notre Dame students and as compromising of the University's ideals and stated mission." What precisely is compromised? The assertion that "the intellectual interchange essential to a university requires, and is enriched by the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students" and that "the University prides itself on

being an environment of teaching and learning which fosters the development in its students of those disciplined habits of mind, body and spirit which characterize educated, skilled and free human beings." Nussbaum clearly interprets this mission statement as the University's signing on to her liberal ideals which were then betrayed by not allowing homosexuals to organize. And so, apparently, does the vast majority of the faculty senate. To such disfavor we have come.

What is wrong with this argumentation? That anything can be discussed in a university is one sort of claim. That any mode of moral behavior has equal right to expression is quite another claim. It is the latter that is being demanded, not the former. That the senate majority is less than sincere in its dismay, has recently been made all too clear. Despite all the agitation, rallies, senate votes and the like, *there had been no serious discussion of the question of homosexuality on the Notre Dame campus*. The faculty senate did not seek to educate students on the matter. And when, in the fall of 1997, several graduate students organized a series of lectures on homosexuality, to be given by a distinguished group of speakers, many invited from outside the university, Campus Ministry took out a full page in *The Observer* urging students not to attend these lectures! Many reasons were given, most of them incoherent, but the overall point was clear. Homosexuality cannot be discussed at Notre Dame in a way that threatens the ideology of

those agitating for its recognition on campus. This from Campus Ministry. *O tempora, O mores*, as Martha Nussbaum might have said. She presumably would have been shocked by this assault on the principles of the University's mission statement. Hers would have been a lonely protest. Not one single member of the faculty senate took umbrage at this attack on a lecture series whose high caliber is now generally acknowledged. Homosexuality in its various aspects, psychological, medical, moral, spiritual, is being discussed as such matters should be discussed at a university. And those who arranged it have been browbeaten by professors and maligned by campus ministry.

Of course it is not simply the familiar inconsistency of those who invoke Nussbaumian liberal principles that is at issue. It is those principles themselves. They have led in the wider world to the privatizing first of religious faith and then of moral judgments. The overriding liberal principle seems to be that no moral judgment is objectively true. Views may coincide on certain judgments, traditions may grow up around them, but the underlying judgments are still open to question because they are without real foundation. Nussbaum invokes Socrates as the champion of this willingness to question everything. Perhaps remembering Kierkegaard's *Johannes Climacus*, whose hero tries to take seriously the maxim *de omnibus dubitandum est*, with disastrous results and to the surprise of his professors, she warns

against skepticism. She seems also fleetingly concerned about moral relativism and nihilism, but the best she can offer here is that there are some who do not think that relativism and nihilism result from the principles of liberalism. It would be merely a contingent fact, apparently, if they did not.

But I shall leave to others the examination of Nussbaum's principles in the secular order. I am discussing her suggestion that unless they become the internal rule of the Catholic university it cannot be a "modern university." There is nothing in the documents of John Paul II that she cites that gives any support to her own outlook. *Ex corde ecclesiae* speaks of academic freedom "correctly understood." But the claim that there is a correct understanding of academic freedom would be a breach of it in the Nussbaumian sense. In addressing the United Nations, the Holy Father does indeed celebrate the variety and diversity of human life, but to suggest that he is thereby signing onto liberal principles would be outrageous. So too the suggestion that Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Liberty is the adoption of the privatizing and subjectivizing of religious faith in the liberal manner is simply wrong. The Church's relation to modern social and political developments is a complicated one, but it would be tendentious to see it as the Church's slow acceptance of values inimical to her doctrine and mission.

The Church is more a judge than an ally of the attitude expressed by Martha Nussbaum in

her book. Nussbaum's concern is to cultivate humanity. But the culture aimed at looks an awful lot like the Culture of Death described by the Holy Father in *Evangelium Vitae*.

Let me stress that I do not blame Martha Nussbaum for her sense that Catholic universities like Notre Dame are eager to become like what she is pleased to call the "modern university." Who can blame her for finding in the senate resolution an outlook exactly like her own? Who would not find fundamental confusion in a Campus Ministry that, in the name of Catholicism, would mute the serious discussion of moral positions quite incompatible with Catholicism? There is a malaise in Catholic higher education and it threatens to get worse before it gets better. The great tradition out of which we have come, and in which John Paul II stands, seems effectively forgotten. The laudable desire to excel has led to the culpable adoption of an outlook that spells the destruction of the Catholic university.

It is an outlook which, *pace* Martha Nussbaum, is destroying higher education in America. Many have noted that pleas for multiculturalism are veiled attacks on western culture and more precisely its Christian roots. A multiculturalism that regards the culture in which one stands as simply an arbitrary arrangement mounted on moral judgments that have no objective truth implies a notion of the human person at total odds with the teaching of John Paul II. It is the

plurality of persons as much as the plurality of cultures that has come to be distorted. What is a person? What is human nature? Why do we have minds? Why is there anything at all rather than nothing? It will not do simply to say that there are lots of different answers to such questions. It will not do simply to say that we have to live with a plurality of answers.

If that is the best we can do then “the liberal outlook” will no longer be sustained by the deeper view on which it has for so long been parasitic, and it will definitively collapse.

Nick Carraway, the narrator of *The Great Gatsby*, describes himself as that narrowest of specialists, the well-rounded man. That was before the events of the

novel. In retrospect, he finds that he wants the world to stand at moral attention forever. He has caught a glimpse of chaos and drawn back. “Life,” he concludes, “is much better looked at from a single window after all.” Of course all windows are single, but only one gives on the great globe itself.

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